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Glue factory cleanup under way

Cleanup of the abandoned glue factory on 40 School Street in Middleton is in the hands of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Workers arrived on site recently, asking the town's building inspector for a permit for electricity.

After posting "Keep Out" signs, the contractor was approached by town officials for an explanation of work being done there. EPA official Gilberto

Irizarry then notified various town boards that his agency would take up to three months to organize the removal of some 500 drums of hazardous waste stored at the factory. Besides toluene and acetone, the drums hold MEK, phosphoric acid, and flammable liquids, according to Irizarry's report.

Building Inspector Robert Aldenberg said that owner Patricia Auterio of Stoneham had gone as

far as possible to try and clean up the site where the glue manufacturing business operated until the early 1990s. Both the State DEP and the owner had failed to clean up the hazardous materials which a next-door neighbor claims contaminated a private well.

While not considered a priority Superfund site, the abandoned glue factory posed a threat to the public and the environment, according to the EPA official.